City Hall Report

Garrison May Be in Trouble

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By DAVID SNYDER

Can "The Giant" be beaten?

It didn't look that way a few weeks ago, but maybe, just maybe, Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison is in real trouble.

Former assistant U.S. Attorney Harry Connick this week picked up the backing of candidate for mayor John J. Petre. He could also get the backing of Councilman Moon Landrieu, another top contender for mayor.

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That may be all he gets, but with strong endorsements from organizations and other sources, it could just be enough to win a runoff election spot.

It now appears unlikely that Connick can win the endorsement of either James E. Fitzmorris Jr. or William Guste, although the Guste door is not entirely closed.

Lloyd Rittiner has already made it clear he does not intend to endorse a ticket and David Gertler will remain noncommital until after Tuesday, the last day a candidate may withdraw.

What the new wave of support means for Connick is money. He has been starved for money backing, partly because he looked like a loser. Multiple endorsements plus other support can change all of that. The coming week should tell the story.

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THAT RED BEANS and rice affair at the Press Club Thursday was, in a way, symbolic of the current mayor's race. It was mass confusion, and if the candidates didn't relish talking into an unrelenting roar of conversation, the patrons seemed to enjoy themselves.

The mayor's race itself is more than a little confusing.

The decision by former CAO Thomas J. Heier Jr. to get out of the councilman-at-large race, perhaps because he could not line up multiple endorsements, leaves Guste with a decision to make. He must come up with a running mate for his other councilman-at-large pick, state Rep. Ernest N. Morial.

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MORIAL, THE STATE'S only Negro legislator, has his own problems.

He had been banking on an endorsement from Petre, but that backing has apparently gone up in smoke. Morial will very likely get the backing of Landrieu, and he doesn't rule out an endorsement from Gertler. They are talking.

It now appears likely that Petre will endorse Ralph Dwyer and Guy Wootan, both attorneys, for councilmen-at-large.

Petre will endorse James Higgins in District A and probably will back Carolyn "Blondie" Labouisse against incumbent Eddie L. Sapir in District B. Rumors that the only woman candidate in the councilmanic race would give it up are not true. She will also get the backing of Guste. Eventually, she may wind up with an endorsement from Landrieu, who talked her into running in the first place.

Sapir will be endorsed by Gertler, and Harwood "Woody" Koppel is on the Fitzmorris ticket.

Although Petre doesn't now intend to back a Negro in the councilmanic race, it is possible that he will have two Negroes on his ticket. He is considering Herman A. Metoyer Jr. for clerk of criminal district court, running against incumbent Daniel B. Haggerty, and Freddie B. Warren Jr. for juvenile court judge.

The District D councilmanic race, which looked as though it might be a slam-bang affair, will apparently be tamed considerably.

The word is that both Pascal F. Calogero Jr., a Landrieu candidate (a law partner, in fact), and state Rep. William A. Gill Jr., a Petre man, are both getting out. Neither wanted in to begin with. They became candidates when incumbent District D Councilman James A. Moreau suddenly decided to run at-large.

With Moreau, Gill and Calogero out of the race, several candidates who had only faint hopes before are suddenly strong contenders.

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FITZMORRIS CAMPAIGN: A substantial poll is scheduled to become semi-public knowledge Monday. Those close to the campaign are expecting it to show Fitzmorris leading, as have the other less comprehensive polls in the past.

The Fitzmorris camp is extremely confident, if not of a first primary victory, at least a sure thing to be in the runoff.

Fitzmorris is avoiding needless mistakes this time, and he is better organized. For instance, he has refused to get himself involved in races for parochial offices, as he did in the election he lost to Mayor Victor H. Schiro. His backers say the strategy will pay off.